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16 May 1966

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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***Vietnam: (Information as of 4:30 AM EDT)**

The Political Situation in South Vietnam: Premier Ky's initially successful attempt to assert his government's authority in Da Nang has opened up a new period of political uncertainty.

Early yesterday, Saigon forces moved into Da Nang and quickly seized control of strategic points during the day against only scattered opposition. The city, quiet under a curfew during the night, remains calm this morning although Saigon marines are poised around a pagoda where antigovernment elements have reportedly assembled.

General Huynh Van Cao, a Catholic previously in charge of the army's political warfare department, is to take over the command of I Corps today from General Dinh, who yesterday declared that the government's action in Da Nang was without justification. Other senior officers in I Corps, including both division commanders, yesterday appeared to echo Dinh's sentiments. Dinh today flew to Hue, where defensive preparations have been taken by the First Division commander and General Thi to resist any attempted landing by Saigon forces. Hue is reported quiet although antigovernment leaders are privately consulting.

The Buddhist response has not yet crystallized. A Buddhist Institute communique reportedly issued yesterday described the government's action as a "betrayal," and warned Buddhists to stand by for instructions. Tri Quang urged the US Embassy to intervene in the matter, and, according to press reports, Buddhist youth commissioner Thien Minh called for protest demonstrations. Other ranking Buddhist leaders, including Institute chairman Tam Chau, are currently in Ceylon attending an international Buddhist conference.

Thus far, the government is attempting to portray its action as one restricted to Communist and other subversive elements in Da Nang. Chief of State Thieu, in a later public broadcast, declared that elections would be held on schedule in recognition of the aspirations of "legitimate struggle movements." However, the government is apparently prepared to take any forceful steps necessary should an adverse reaction develop.

The Military Situation in South Vietnam: There have been no reports of significant military action in South Vietnam during the past 24 hours.

On 14 May, South Vietnamese troops in An Xuyen Province killed 72 Viet Cong during a clash with an enemy battalion some 15 miles southeast of the provincial capital. Government losses were 33 wounded (1 US).

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 The Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs
 The Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs
 The Counselor and Chairman of the Policy Planning Council
 The Director of Intelligence and Research
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 The Secretary of the Navy
 The Secretary of the Air Force
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 The Director, The Joint Staff
 The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of Army
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